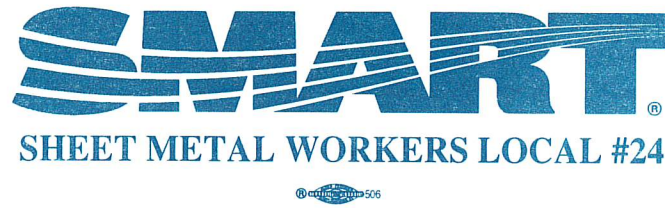


6550 Poe Avenue  
Dayton, Ohio 45414  
Telephone 937.277.9303  
Fax 937.665.0417  
e-mail: dayton@smw24.org



**Rodney French**  
*Business Manager*  
*Financial Secretary-Treasurer*

May 6, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**Re: Support for the Columbus Crossroads INFRA Application**

Dear Secretary Chao:

Columbus Crossroads is a \$1.3 billion, multi-phase project to transform the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 71 in Downtown Columbus and improve freight movement across Ohio and Midwest. I write this letter to (1) express our strong support and to reinforce the strong regional support for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Columbus joint INFRA grant application for Phase 4 of the Columbus Crossroads project; and (2) to urge your support for this catalytic project of national and regional importance.

Leveraging this major investment to replace obsolete highway infrastructure, Columbus Crossroads also seeks to reconnect, restore, and revitalize Downtown Columbus and surrounding neighborhoods. ODOT, the City of Columbus, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), and a diverse group of community stakeholders and business entities have collaborated over the last decade to develop and implement this comprehensive vision.

Phase 4 focuses on the physical overlap of I-70 and I-71. The overlap serves commuter traffic from across Central Ohio, and it serves freight from across the Midwest. The overlap carries 130,000 vehicles per day – including 17,100 commercial vehicles – and exceeds its design capacity by 50,000 vehicles. The overlap's trench creates a physical barrier between Downtown Columbus and the neighborhoods south of the overlap. Phase 4, which costs approximately \$200 million, is essential for improving safety and reducing congestion for commuters and pedestrians; improving access to essential services and more than 100,000 jobs in Downtown Columbus; and reconnecting the southern neighborhoods.

Completion of the Columbus Crossroads project has been identified as a top priority for the City of Columbus, the Central Ohio region, and the State of Ohio. The state recently passed a transportation budget that generates more revenue through higher gas user fees and increased registration fees for local governments and electric vehicles. However, this project cannot be completed without

**CINCINNATI**  
Mark Hamant  
Jeff Mueller  
513.821.5771  
Fax 513.821.7849

**COLUMBUS**  
Jeff Hunley  
Jeff Rush  
614.471.8571  
Fax 614.471.9796

**PRODUCTION  
REPRESENTATIVE**  
Sharon Walker  
513.821.5771  
Fax 513.821.7849

**DAYTON**  
Rick Perdue  
Mike W. Tipton  
937.277.9303  
Fax 937.665-0417

**SOUTH POINT**  
Jeff Rowe  
740.377.9149  
Fax 740.377.9197

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leveraging additional funding from the INFRA grants program. We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Transportation consider the importance of these improvements to the prosperity of our region and state, and the resiliency of the national interstate highway system; and we respectfully urge your support for the application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rodney A. French". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rodney French  
Business Manager/Financial Secretary-Treasurer

RF:drs

copy: Mr. Dan DeBono, Chief Infrastructure Funding Officer  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590